

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS for PROVIDERS

Updated as of April 9, 2020

Pacific Diagnostic Laboratories (PDL) has updated the frequently asked questions due to the changing situation with the COVID-19 pandemic. PDL's primary focus continues to be the safety of the public, patients, healthcare providers, and our employees.

### Q: What test does PDL offer for Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)?

**A:** PDL is offering the **2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19), NAA (LAB10716)** test through LabCorp, our primary reference lab. The COVID-19 test is intended for use in the detection of SARS-CoV-2 to assist in the diagnosis of COVID-2019 infections.

The COVID-19 test is orderable as an individual test, as a co-test with the Respiratory Panel PCR, as well as a reflex from the Respiratory Panel PCR if the panel is negative.

Healthcare providers should follow CDC and local public health guidelines on determining appropriate testing. As the situation is very dynamic, it is important to check for updates frequently.

Please note: Due to the dynamic nature of the COVID-19 response and testing development, PDL is observing frequent updates to the specimen requirements by our reference labs. We recommend checking our online test catalogue for the most up to date requirements: [www.pdllabs.com](http://www.pdllabs.com).

<b>NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19), NAA</b>	<b>PDL Lab Code: LAB10716</b>	Referred to LabCorp
<p><b>Turnaround Time:</b> 2-4 days (UPDATED)</p> <p><b>Volume:</b> 1.4 mL (UPDATED)</p> <p><b>Specimen Type/Container:</b> Nasopharyngeal (NP) swab (preferred) or Oropharyngeal (OP) swab in viral transport medium (UTM) or eSwab™ or saline*. Also acceptable: OP or NP washes/aspirates, bronchial washing, bronchoalveolar lavage (BAL) or tracheal aspirates in sterile cups.</p> <p><b>Collection Note:</b> If a patient has a lot of mucus in their nose, it can cause issues with testing and result in a possible QNS specimen. The recommendation is to have the patient gently clear their nasal passage with a tissue before a swab is taken.</p> <p><i>*Swabs in Saline: OP or NP swabs (cotton or synthetic tip ONLY – no calcium alginate tips, wood shaft swab or swabs in preservative) placed in 1 to 3 mL of sterile saline (0.85-0.9%) in a screw cap tube.</i></p>		
<b>RESPIRATORY PANEL BY PCR W/ REFLEX COVID-19</b>	<b>PDL Lab Code: LAB10721</b>	Performed by PDL
<p><b>Reflex:</b> COVID-19 LAB10716 to LabCorp if panel is NEGATIVE</p> <p><b>Turnaround Time:</b> Respiratory Panel is performed the same day as received.</p> <p><b>Specimen Volume:</b> 3 mL <b>Minimum Volume:</b> 2 mL</p> <p><b>Specimen Type/Container:</b> Nasopharyngeal (NP) swab in viral transport medium (UTM or M5)</p>		

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### Q: Is PDL sending COVID-19 testing to any other referral lab?

**A:** Yes. PDL is utilizing Sonic based in LA as a secondary referral lab. PDL assesses daily how testing is directed for COVID-19. This assessment includes taking into consideration the specimen collection device, volume submitted and turnaround time needs. At this time, we are not offering for clients to order the Sonic code directly.

### Q: Can an eSwab™ be used in place of UTM?

**A:** Yes. If a COVID-19 test is the only test being requested, the eSwab™ (blue cap) can be used.

As there is a national shortage of UTM kits we are asking that the UTM kits be used judiciously and when possible use the eSwab™ alternative for COVID-19 testing.

Note: If a Respiratory Panel by PCR test is requested on the same specimen as a COVID-19 test, then a Nasopharyngeal swab in UTM needs to be collected. An eSwab™ cannot be used in these cases as it is not an acceptable collection container for the Respiratory Panel PCR.

### Q: Where can our office obtain collection supplies?

**A:** Collection supplies for this testing are ordered through the standard supply request process.

SUPPLY NAME	ORDER #	QUANTITY
eSwab™ (Blue Cap) includes a Nasopharyngeal (NP) swab	AM482C	BUNDLE of 5
BD™ Universal Viral Transport Media (UVT/UTM) <i>Includes Flocked Sterile Swab</i>	1026	BUNDLE of 5
Sterile (UA) Cup	614	BAG of 100

- COVID-19 NP swab can be submitted in a UTM or eSwab™ (see specimen requirements for the test for all options).
- RESPIRATORY PANEL must be a NP swab in UTM.
- RESPIRATORY PANEL and COVID-19: Can be tested from ONE NP swab/UTM collection.
- ALLOCATION measures are in place for the UTM kits due to a national supply shortage.
- ORDER REVIEW: Your office utilization will be taken into consideration in our review of supply requests. Your sales representative may reach out for more information regarding your request.

### Q: Who can collect the specimen?

**A:** Specimen collection MUST be performed by the physician or other healthcare provider.

- PDL does **NOT** offer any collection services for this testing at the Patient Service Centers.
- **DO NOT** direct suspect COVID-19 patients to a Patient Service Center.
- **DO NOT** drop COVID-19 specimens to a Patient Service Center.
- **SPECIMEN PICK-UP:** Contact PDL Courier Services for pickup from provider office if routine pickup is not already scheduled.

### Q: Can a COVID-19 specimen be self-collected?

**A:** PDL is not accepting self-collected specimens. In order to obtain an adequate specimen for testing with the highest probability of detecting the virus if present, the specimen should be collected by a physician or other healthcare provider.

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### **Q: Can a nasal swab be submitted for COVID-19 testing?**

**A:** A nasal swab is not recommended for COVID-19 testing and has a low recovery rate for COVID-19. A Nasopharyngeal (NP) swab is the recommended specimen type by the CDC for the initial diagnosis of COVID-19. NP collections have shown the best detection rate for the COVID-19 virus. Oropharyngeal (OP) swabs are acceptable if a NP swab is not possible.

### **Q: Can excess mucus cause issues with test performance?**

**A:** Yes. If a patient has a lot of mucus in the nose, it can cause issues with testing and result in a possible QNS specimen. The recommendation is to have the patient gently clear their nasal passage with a tissue before a swab is taken.

### **Q: Can a COVID-19 specimen be dropped off to a PSC?**

**A:** No. We are not accepting COVID-19 specimens at our PSC locations. Please contact PDL Courier Services for pick-up if you do not already have a scheduled pick-up.

### **Q: Is there a recommended submission time each day for COVID-19 specimens?**

**A:** Specimens received by 5 pm will be shipped to our referral lab that same evening. Specimens received after 5 pm will be shipped the following day. Ordering COVID-19 on its own requisition helps prioritize for faster routing.

### **Q: If the result is positive, when will the ordering provider receive notification?**

**A:** A positive result on an outreach patient is treated as a semi-urgent value and will be called between 7:30 AM – 6:30 PM Monday through Friday and between 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM Saturday and Sunday in accordance to the semi-urgent value procedure. Due to the volume of testing, PDL is no longer providing courtesy calls for negative results to provider offices. If a provider would like to be called regardless of the result, please request that on the test order submitted with the specimen.

### **Q: I received a report back that indicates the specimen was quantity not sufficient (QNS) for testing yet the specimen submitted met volume requirements. Why was it QNS?**

**A:** There are several reasons a QNS may occur:

- Minimum volume was submitted which did not allow for repeat testing (repeat testing may be needed if an analytic error occurs)
- Specimen had significant mucus in it which interfered with testing and a result could not be obtained
- Specimen submitted leaked in transit

The recommendation is to recollect and retest if still clinically indicated for the patient.

### **Q: I received a result of indeterminate, what does that mean?**

**A:** It indicates that the testing process could not clearly define the result as a negative or a positive result.

The recommendation is to recollect and retest if still clinically indicated for the patient.

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### Q: Is this a reportable result to Public Health?

**A:** Yes, this is a reportable test to Public Health.

State Public Health notification: Performing lab will be notifying State Public Health of the positive and negative results.

Local/County Public Health notification: Providers are required to report results to local Public Health.

- SB County Public Health 24/7 (805) 681-5280
- SLO County Public Health M-F (805) 781-5500; after hours and weekends (805) 781-4553
- Ventura County Public Health (805) 465-6650

### Q: How much does the COVID-19 test cost?

**A:** The test price ranges between \$51-70 depending upon the performing laboratory.

### Q: Is serology testing for COVID-19 available?

**A:** A number of laboratories have submitted to the FDA for Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) for COVID-19 serology tests. Please note that there is a high level of caution due to interference and cross reactivity of many of the tests. PDL is monitoring serology testing efficacy closely and will be adopting a quality test once one is available.

The CDC has stated that during this pandemic phase of COVID-19, nucleic acid amplification of RNA is the test of choice for detection of the virus.

### Q: When will PDL be performing COVID-19 testing in-house?

**A:** PDL is currently performing COVID-19 testing in-house for Tier 1 patients only as defined by Public Health and Cottage Health Infection Prevention leadership at this time. We are unable to provide outreach testing due to limited reagent. At this time, all vendors are allocating reagents due to high demand and limited supply. We continue to monitor daily for our referral lab performance as well as our internal capacity. When reagents become more readily available we will re-evaluate offering outreach testing.

### Q: Where can I find more information and get updates?

**A:** Contact your **local public health** for more information and direction for your specific community. Additionally, information is available online:

- California Public Health (CDPH): <https://www.cdph.ca.gov>
- Center for Disease Control: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/index.html>
- Cottage Health: <https://www.cottagehealth.org/covid19>
- SB County Public Health: <https://publichealthsb.org>
- SLO County Public Health: <https://www.emergencyslo.org/en/covid19.aspx>
- Ventura County Public Health: <https://www.vcemergency.com>